

**Old Dominion University
Office of Counseling Services**

Getting Unstuck

Materials and curriculum courtesy of Cal Poly Counseling Services

Welcome!

Getting Unstuck is to help increase your understanding about depression.
Please work through it at your own pace, stopping and re-starting when needed.

Goals:

- Provide skills to recognize depressive symptoms
- Introduce tools to manage depressive symptoms you may be experiencing

Important Note: you will receive a lot of information that may feel overwhelming at times. Please remember that like any skill (e.g., learning to ride a bike), these skills *take time and practice* to master.

Mental Health Hygiene

These skills are a form of “mental health hygiene.”

In the beginning they may seem tedious

You may question why you need to practice these skills so often.

- Think of it like dental hygiene—you brush your teeth to prevent the buildup of plaque and ultimately to prevent cavities. Like brushing your teeth, daily practice can minimize and prevent the symptoms of depression long-term.
- ❖ The more you practice, the less tedious they may seem because they become part of daily life.

Getting Unstuck Sections

#1: Depression 101

#2: Unhelpful Thoughts and Behaviors

#3: Modifying Thoughts and Behaviors – My
Personalized Plan

“

There is no person in
this whole world who
is a **mistake**, no
matter how different
that person **may**
seem.

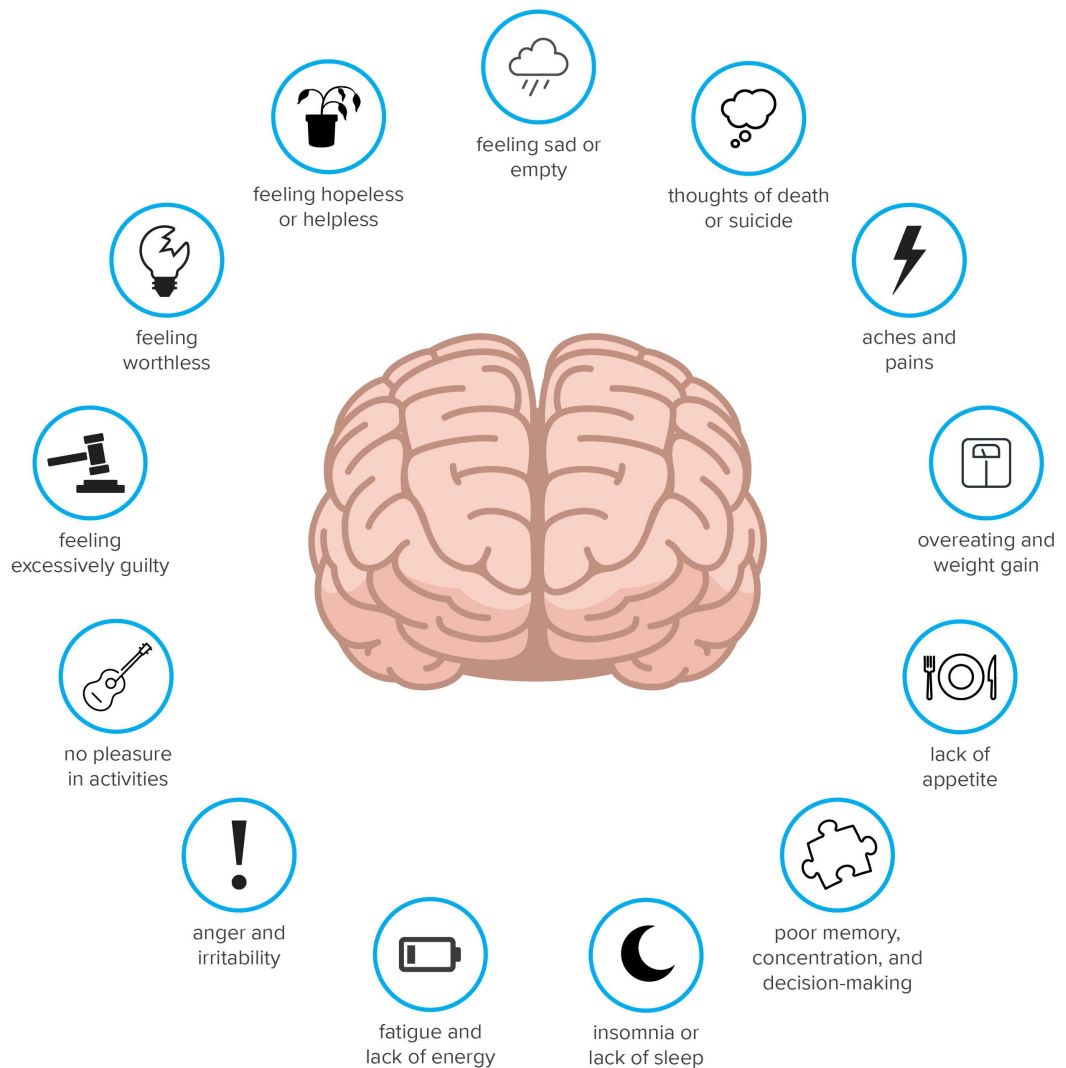
~Mr. Rogers



1. Depression 101

Common Depression Symptoms

Do any of these symptoms sound familiar to you?



Sadness vs Depression

Sadness

- Is a normal, painful, response to challenging life events
- Usually passes when the challenging event passes
- Something we all experience at some point in our lives

Depression

- May or may not include feelings of sadness
- Is **more persistent**
- Includes a **cluster** of symptoms
- May or may not arise out of a painful experience, so a person might not **identify a reason** for symptoms

THE SPIRAL OF DEPRESSION

This leads to still
greater levels of
despair, negativity
and depression with
even worse physical
symptoms



Depressive symptoms
like loss of sleep
and poor
concentration
mean we cope less
well and things go
wrong

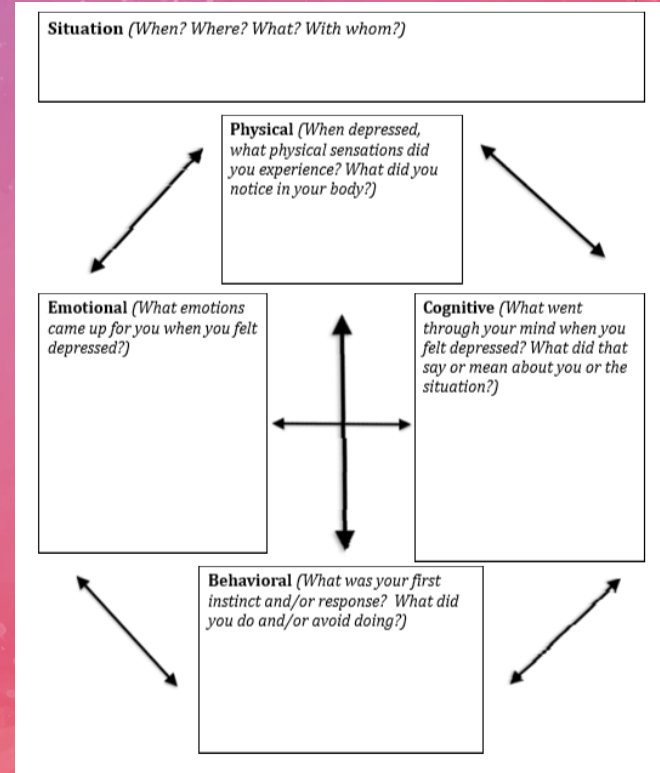
Which leaves us
even less able
to cope
... and so on

Now What?



Cross Sectional Formulation

- Now let's get a fuller picture!
- Explore the interactions between:
 - Situation
 - Physical Sensations
 - Emotional Reactions
 - Behavioral Experiences
 - Cognitive Responses



Cross Sectional Formulation

Let's Look at an Example...

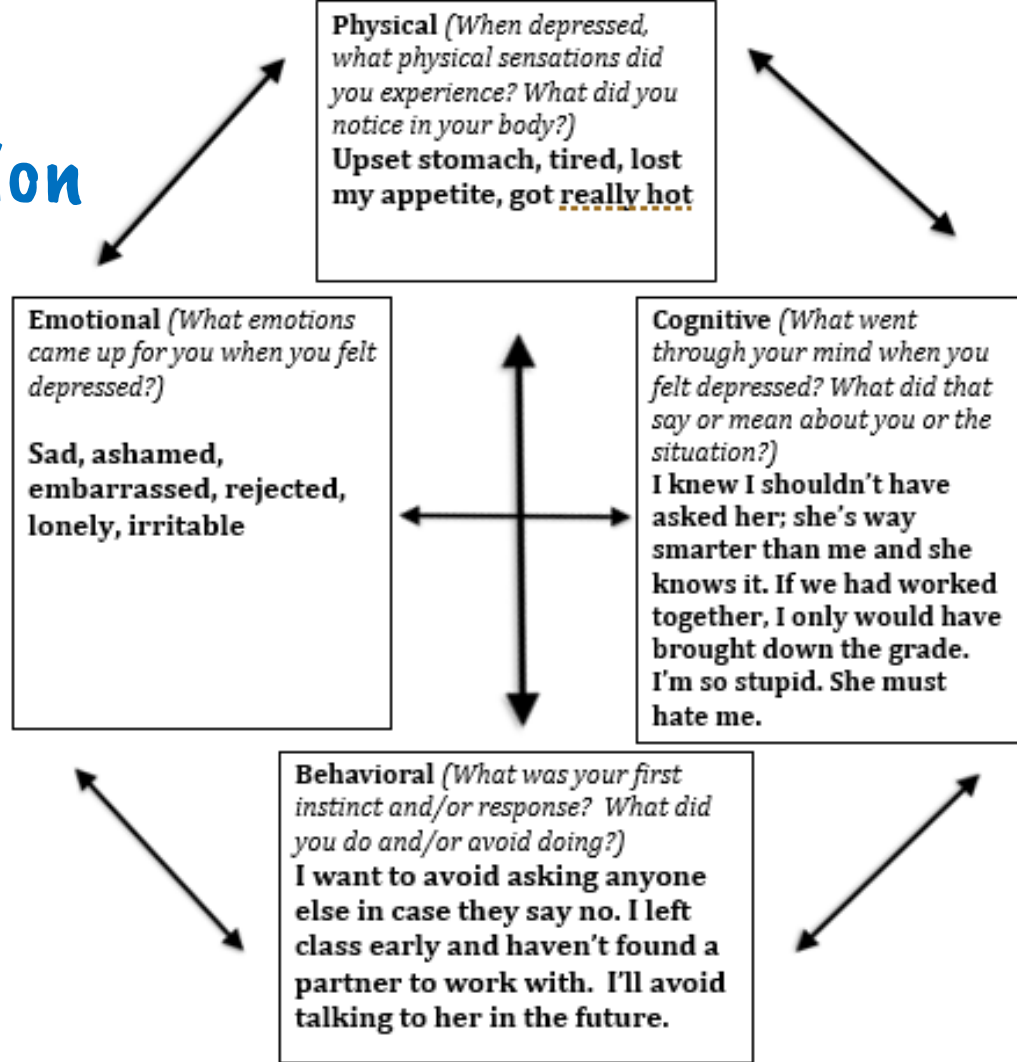
Situation (*When? Where? What? With whom?*)

I have a group assignment due for my class. I asked a fellow classmate to be my partner, but she declined.

Cross Sectional Formulation

Let's look at the interactions between:

- Physical Sensations
- Emotional Reactions
- Behavioral Experiences
- Cognitive Responses



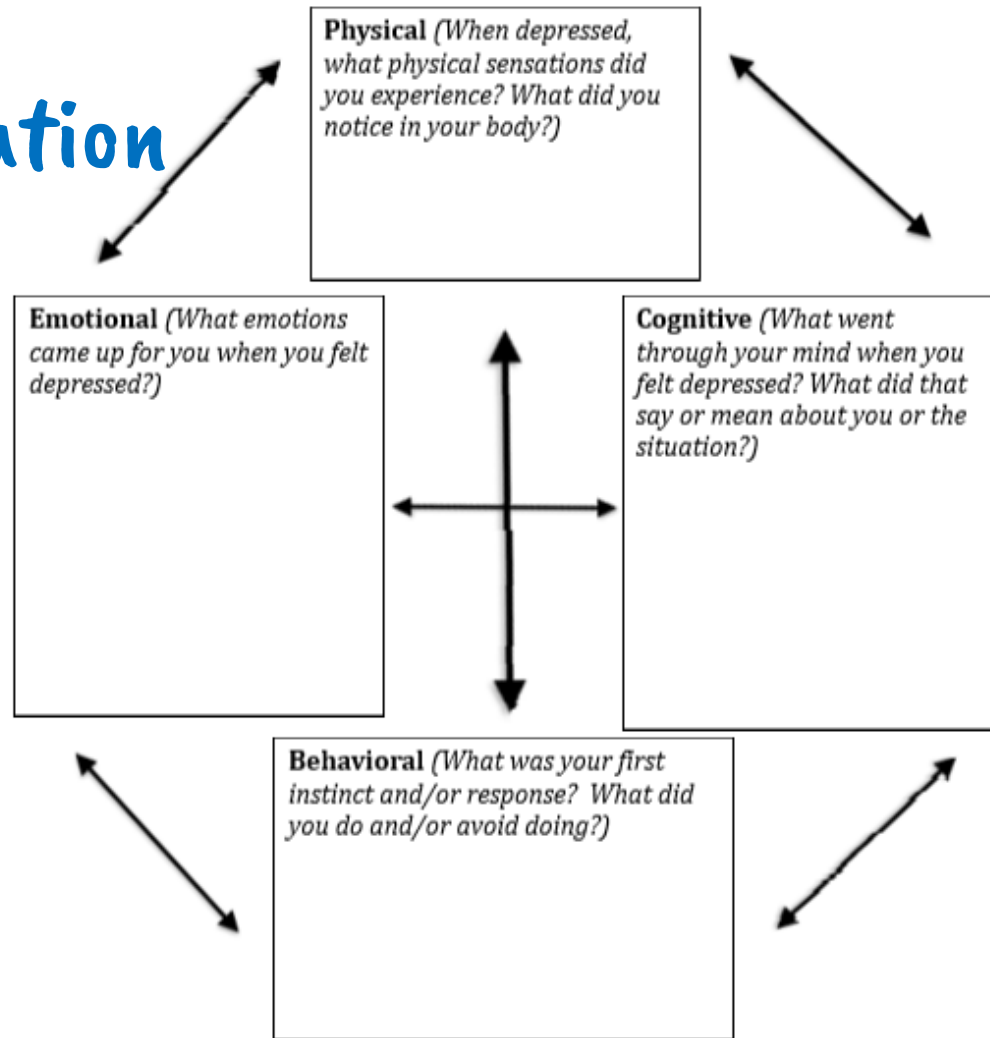
Cross Sectional Formulation

- Now take a minute to think about a time when you felt depressed.

Situation (*When? Where? What? With whom?*)

Cross Sectional Formulation

- Now take a minute to jot down the corresponding symptoms of depression you experienced.



Check-in...

Were you able to identify a time when you felt depressed?

Did you have any difficulties writing down your symptoms?

Remember, we'll be asking you to continue to practice these so that you can more easily identify your symptoms.

Wrap-Up Depression 101

SELF CARE

- ❑ To wrap up, let's talk about basic self-care.
- ❑ Good sleep, along with exercise/physical activity and attending to your personal nutritional needs, are the foundation of basic physical and mental health.
- ❑ Without this foundation, you may find you're more vulnerable to depressive symptoms.



Basic Self-Care

Sleep



Research shows you need 7–8 hours of sleep every night

While sleeping, our brain is hard at work

Sleep also helps regulate our mood and weight.

Exercise



Exercise leads to changes, such as

- improved mood,
- more energy
- improved memory, coping, and cognitive functioning.

Nutrition



Research shows that deficiencies in vitamins and minerals are linked to mood

Stay hydrated and eat a balanced diet

Speak to a medical doctor about concerns

Sleep Hygiene Tips

Get Regular



Go to bed and get up at more or less the same time every day, even on weekends and days off!

Avoid Alcohol

Avoid alcohol for at least 4-6 hours before bed because it interrupts the quality of sleep.

Get up & try again

Go to sleep only when tired. If you haven't been able to fall asleep after 30 minutes, get up and do something calming, then return to bed and try again.

The right space

Make your bed and bedroom quiet and comfortable for sleeping. An eye mask and earplugs may help block out light and noise.

Bed is for sleeping

Do not use your bed for anything other than sleeping and sex, so that your body comes to associate bed with sleep.

Avoid caffeine & nicotine

Avoid consuming any caffeine (coffee, chocolate) or nicotine (cigarettes) for at least 4-6 hours before going to bed. These act as stimulants and interfere with falling asleep.



Sleep Hygiene Tips

Electronics Curfew

Don't use back-lit electronics 60 minutes prior to bed, as the artificial light prevents hormones and neurons that promote sleep.



No clock-watching

Checking the clock during the night can wake you up and reinforces negative thoughts such as "Oh no, look how late it is, I'll never get to sleep."

Keep same daytime routine

Even if you have a bad night sleep it is important that you try to keep your daytime activities the same as planned. That is, don't avoid activities because you feel tired. This can reinforce the insomnia.



Sleep rituals

Develop rituals to remind your body that it is time to sleep, like relaxing stretches or breathing exercises for 15 minutes before bed.

No naps

Avoid taking naps during the day. If you can't make it through the day without a nap, make sure it is for less than an hour and before 3pm.



Exercise Tips



Find Enjoyable Activity

Choose a pleasurable activity, like playing badminton or doing yoga. Aim for fun, not more work.



Start Small

Commit to 10 minutes of exercise a day or add exercise to your daily routine (like walking to school or dancing in your room)



Get Outside

The sun provides a mood “pick me up” of its own, producing serotonin in the brain. Take a walk outside or go swimming.



Schedule it in

It's easy to skip exercise when we don't plan. Put it in your phone as part of your daily to-do's and celebrate when you check it off.



Mix it Up

To avoid feeling bored with exercise, try a number of different activities.



Team Up

Depression can be isolating. Ask others to do team activities or find an exercise buddy for accountability and to increase interaction.

Practice

Homework 1: Complete at least one cross sectional formulation

Homework 2: Implement at least 1 sleep hygiene tip and 1 exercise tip

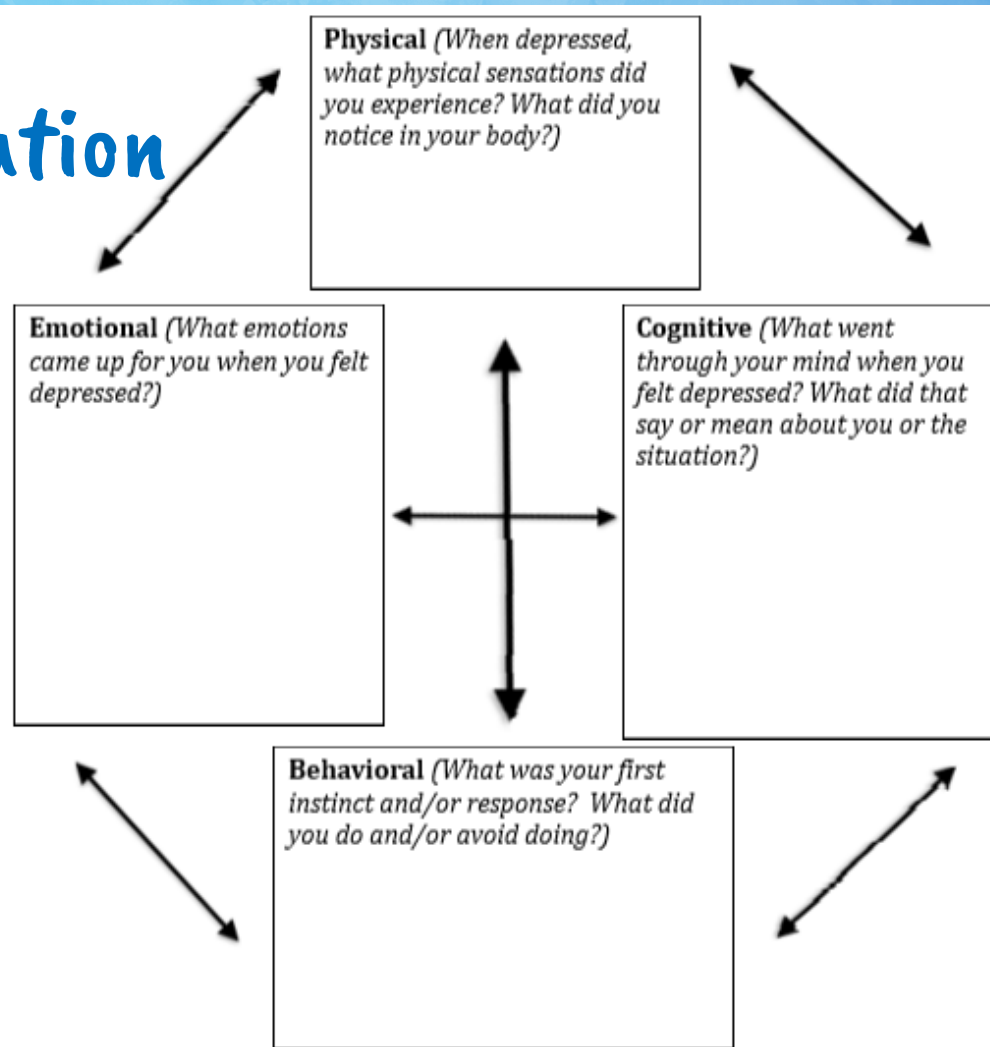
Cross Sectional Formulation

- Now take a minute to think about a time when you felt depressed.

Situation (*When? Where? What? With whom?*)

Cross Sectional Formulation

- Now take a minute to jot down the corresponding symptoms of depression you experienced.



2. Unhelpful Thoughts and Behaviors

**To
begin...**



**Some of our habitual
thinking patterns
and behaviors may be
keeping us depressed**

Habits...

Important to note:

Our thoughts and behaviors are not driven by conscious intention, but by habits in thinking and behaving.

Habits are formed by what

- Is pleasurable
- Avoids pain
- What we've done in the past



Getting Stuck...



When we keep repeating a thought or behavior, the habit is strengthened more by repetition.

Our brain does not distinguish between good and bad or helpful and unhelpful thoughts or behaviors!

Thus, we maintain the thought or behavior even when we know that it is not helpful. *In other words, we get stuck.*

Unhelpful Thoughts

Labelling



Assigning labels to ourselves or other people

I'm a loser
I'm completely useless
They're such an idiot

Jumping to conclusions



$2 + 2 = 5$

There are two key types of jumping to conclusions:

- **Mind reading**
(imagining we know what others are thinking)
- **Fortune telling**
(predicting the future)

Magnification (catastrophising) & minimisation



Blowing things out of proportion (catastrophising), or inappropriately shrinking something to make it seem less important

Emotional reasoning



Assuming that because we feel a certain way what we think must be true.

I feel embarrassed so I must be an idiot

should
must

Using critical words like 'should', 'must', or 'ought' can make us feel guilty, or like we have already failed

If we apply 'shoulds' to other people the result is often frustration

Do any of these sound familiar?

Unhelpful Thoughts (cont.)

Personalisation

"this is my fault"

Blaming yourself or taking responsibility for something that wasn't completely your fault. Conversely, blaming other people for something that was your fault.

All or nothing thinking



Sometimes called 'black and white thinking'

If I'm not perfect I have failed

Either I do it right or not at all

Over-generalising

"everything is always rubbish"

"nothing good ever happens"

Seeing a pattern based upon a single event, or being overly broad in the conclusions we draw

Mental filter



Only paying attention to certain types of evidence.

Noticing our failures but not seeing our successes

Disqualifying the positive



Discounting the good things that have happened or that you have done for some reason or another

That doesn't count

Do any of these sound familiar?

Unhelpful Behaviors

Do you find yourself doing any of these behaviors?

Stay inside all the time	Play video games for hours	Constantly monitor social media	Stay in your bed	Stay in your room; don't leave	Stop talking to your roommate
Stop completing tasks	Stop going to work	Stop exercising	Watch a lot of TV	Only eat one meal a day	Argue with other people
Stop doing your hobbies	Only focus on the negative	Complain a lot	Use recreational drugs	Sleep all day	Don't move
Only listen to music that makes you sad, angry or upset	Stop smiling and laughing	Stop going to church, meditating or praying	Let your room get really disorganized	Self-harm	Smoke marijuana

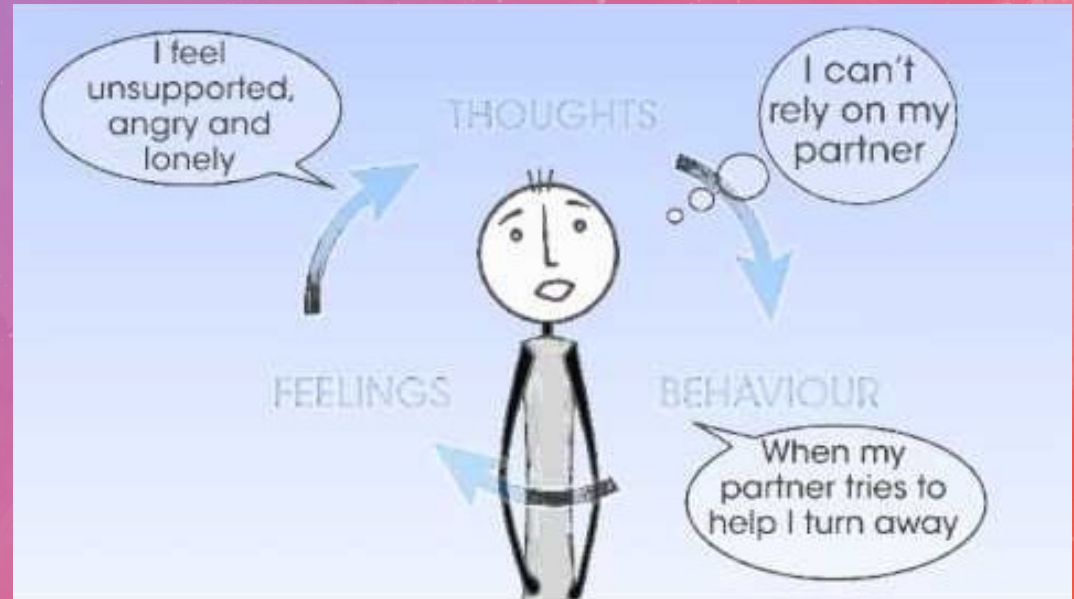
Unhelpful Behaviors (cont.)

Do you find yourself doing any of these behaviors?

Get up at different times every morning	Go to bed at different times every night	Miss class	Don't do a homework assignment	Wait until the last minute to get something done	Stop washing your hair
Stop brushing your teeth	Skip a test	Stop going to team or club meeting	Ignore or decline invites to hang out	Skip a meal	Over eat
Eat lots of junk food	Binge drink	Smoke cigarettes	Stop talking to/actively avoid your friends	Stop talking to/actively avoid your family	Don't seek help when you are struggling

Unhelpful Thoughts & Behaviors

Now let's look at how our thoughts, behaviors and feelings influence each other, helping to create a spiral of depression.



Thoughts, Feelings, and Behaviors Youtube Video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ngr2kG48Xvw>

Good News!

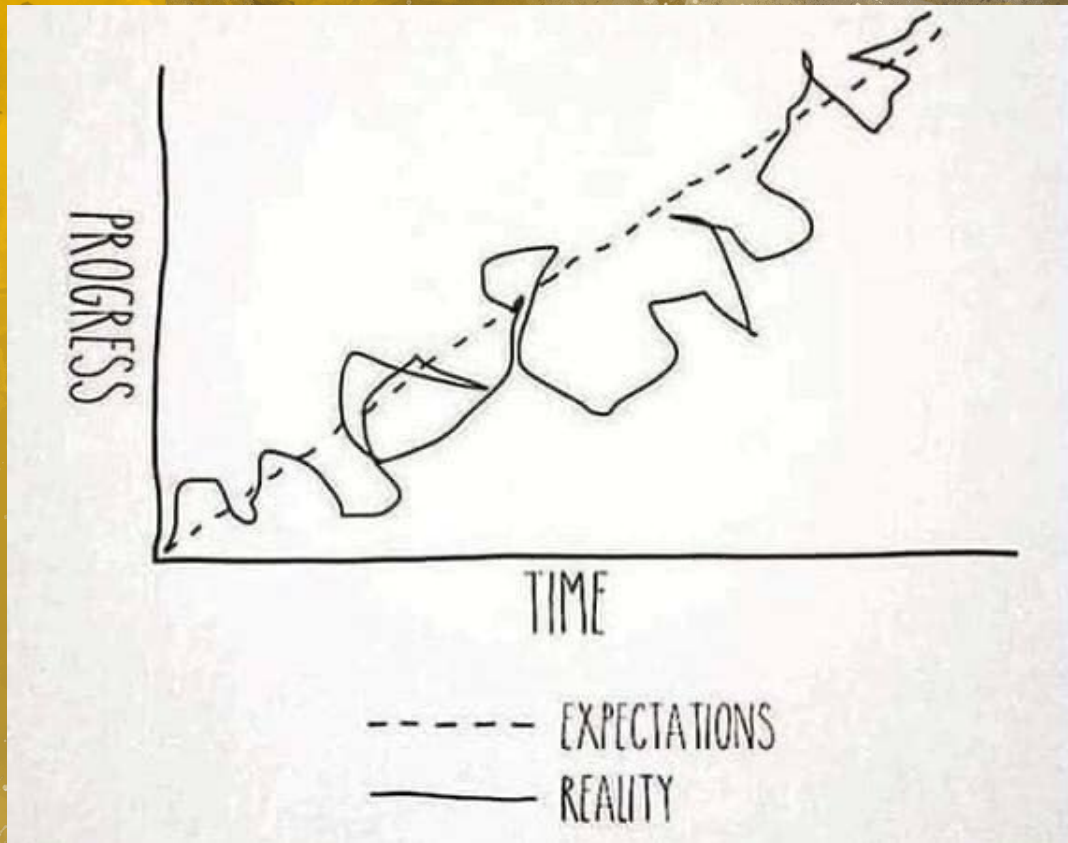
Our brain is not wired to keep us stuck only in bad habits.

- We can create and get stuck in good ones too!

When you intentionally create new habits, initial discomfort, they become easier.

Chances are, you've been stuck in your current patterns for a long time. It will also take time to create new patterns.





We encourage you to be patient with yourself!

Practice

Homework 1: Complete Managing Habits Worksheet

Homework 2: Complete at least one cross sectional formulation

Managing Habits Worksheet

Things I think and do that maintain my depressed mood:

Examples of thoughts: Magnification, disqualifying the positive, emotional reasoning

Examples of behaviors: Skip meals, stop exercising, stay up late, stop showering, miss class, avoid friends

Day	Thoughts	Behaviors
1		
2 (Sat or Sun)		

Managing Habits Worksheet

Things I think and do that help me feel okay, good, and/or accomplished:

Examples of thoughts: Compliment yourself, give yourself credit for doing something, talk back to your negative thoughts, remind yourself to be gentle to yourself, think about a good memory

Examples of behaviors: Read a book for fun, go to a club meeting, brush my teeth at night, go to the library to study, clean/organize my room, eat breakfast, take vitamins, call a friend, go to a coffee shop, do a chore

Day	Thoughts	Behaviors
1		
2 (Sat or Sun)		

Cross Sectional Formulation

- Now take a minute to think about a time when you felt depressed.

Situation (*When? Where? What? With whom?*)

Cross Sectional Formulation

- Now take a minute to jot down the corresponding symptoms of depression you experienced.

Physical (When depressed, what physical sensations did you experience? What did you notice in your body?)

Emotional (What emotions came up for you when you felt depressed?)

Cognitive (What went through your mind when you felt depressed? What did that say or mean about you or the situation?)

Behavioral (What was your first instinct and/or response? What did you do and/or avoid doing?)

The diagram consists of four rectangular boxes arranged in a diamond pattern. Each box contains a question related to a different domain of depression. The boxes are interconnected by double-headed arrows: a diagonal arrow between Physical and Emotional, a vertical arrow between Emotional and Cognitive, a horizontal arrow between Emotional and Cognitive, a diagonal arrow between Cognitive and Behavioral, and a diagonal arrow between Physical and Behavioral.

3. Modifying Thoughts and Behaviors



“

Change does not roll
in on the wheels of
inevitability but
comes through
continuous struggle.

~Martin Luther King Jr.

Making Changes

Let's start
by focusing
on making changes
to our thinking
patterns.



Modifying Our Thoughts

Main goal:

Slow down and pay attention to thoughts so that we can intentionally make choices about what to do next.

Let's start with self-affirmations!

Drawing attention to our positive qualities can inhibit or stop the downward spiral.



Self-Affirmations!

Let's take a moment to practice this skill of focusing on our positive qualities.

1. Start your affirmations with "I am" (e.g., "I am a good friend")
2. Keep them short (we don't need a novel)
3. Keep them positive (avoid saying "not")
4. Use feeling words when you can (e.g., "I am proud of myself")
5. Keep them focused on you (after all, they are self-affirmations)

Examples: "I am proud that I am hard-working" or "I am thankful for my strong legs"

What are Your Self-Affirmations?

Feeling Stuck?

Ask Yourself:

When was a time that you felt proud of yourself and why?

Have you ever forgiven someone who has hurt you?

Have you ever received a compliment that you agree with?

What would your best friend or a loved one say about you?



Tips for Modifying Thoughts

Stopping.

Interrupt a thought as it begins. Use a strong image/word to interrupt the thought. Strongly state it, either internally or aloud.



Distracting.

Redirect your mind to something else internally or externally, preferably something pleasant and engaging.



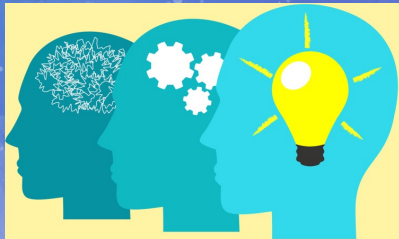
Mindful Observing.

Watch, label, or log your thoughts. Use the language "I am thinking ..." or "My mind is having the thought that..." to distance from the thought.

More Tips for Modifying Thoughts

Understanding.

Begin to understand where thoughts come from by asking: What is the purpose of this thought?



Mindfully Letting Go.

Use imagery or words to visualize thoughts passing by. Good examples are clouds in the sky or leaves on a stream.



Gratitude.

Try to focus on something that you are grateful for from the past, present, or future.



Modifying Behaviors

Now let's shift our attention to creating helpful behavioral habits!

- Choose activities that are do-able for you when you are feeling down.
- The more success you have in doing the little things, the more likely you will be motivated to try more things.

Socializing

Pleasant Activities

Mastery Activities

Socializing

Even though you feel like being alone, feeling less depressed often includes interacting with others.

The idea is to get out of your depressive environment and be around people!

<input type="checkbox"/> Watch a movie with a friend via Chat	<input type="checkbox"/> Find an online dance class, martial arts class, etc. that you can do virtually with a friend
<input type="checkbox"/> Play boardgames using Zoom	<input type="checkbox"/> Join a legitimate online chat room
<input type="checkbox"/> Create a Skype study group	<input type="checkbox"/> After the pandemic plan to eat a meal with a roommate/friend

What will you try?

Pleasant Activities

Similar to not interacting with others, when people are depressed, they may not feel like doing things that they usually enjoy.

Pleasant activities are those things that feel pleasant to you. They may be related to school, family, friends, sports, clubs, exercise, hobbies, nature, spirituality, etc.



<input type="checkbox"/> Play with a pet	<input type="checkbox"/> Color/Paint/Draw/Sculpt
<input type="checkbox"/> Go shopping/window shopping online	<input type="checkbox"/> Write a poem, music, play, story
<input type="checkbox"/> Fix/tinker with something	<input type="checkbox"/> Read for fun
<input type="checkbox"/> Listen to music	<input type="checkbox"/> Watch the sunset/rise

What will you try?

Mastery Activities

When depressed, doing everyday tasks like cleaning or homework can seem like monumental hurdles!!

One way to address this is to start by doing little things that evoke a sense of accomplishment or achievement; these are called mastery experiences.

- Do a load of laundry
- Write that email to your professor
- Return a phone call
- Read a chapter or a page of your homework assignment
- Take out the trash
- Pay a bill

What will you try?



MAKE GIFS AT GIFSOUP.COM

Tips for Modifying Behaviors

Get Sunlight!

Practice Yoga

Get a massage

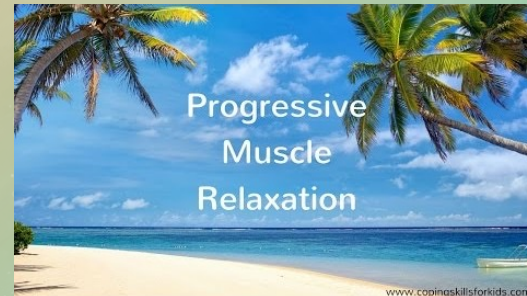
Create/Listen to Music

Laugh & Smile (even if they are fake-it'll help!)

Dance

Journal

Try a Progressive Muscle Relaxation (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Xp2UzG7UYY>)



My Personalized Plan



My Depressive Symptoms

(Find on Slide #7)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

My Unhelpful Thinking

(Find on Slides #29-30)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

My Unhelpful Behaviors

(Find on slides #31-32)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Basic Self-Care Tools

(Find on Slides #18-21)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Thought Exercises

(Find on Slides #44-48)

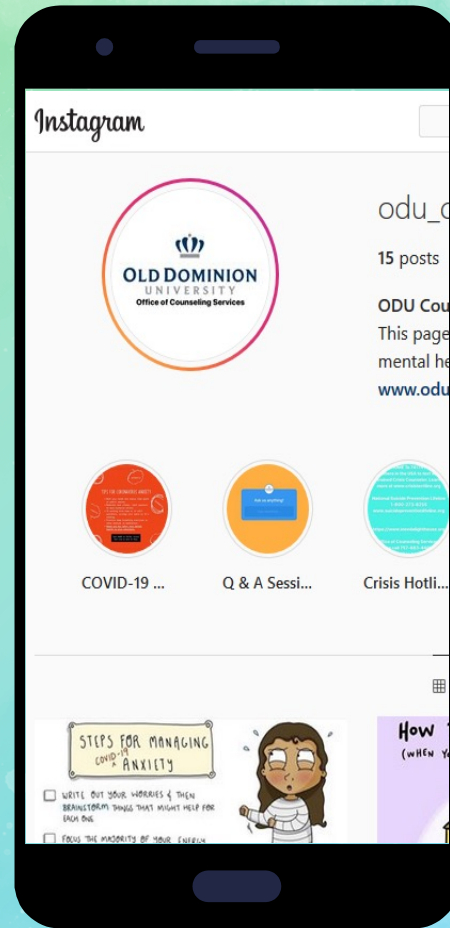
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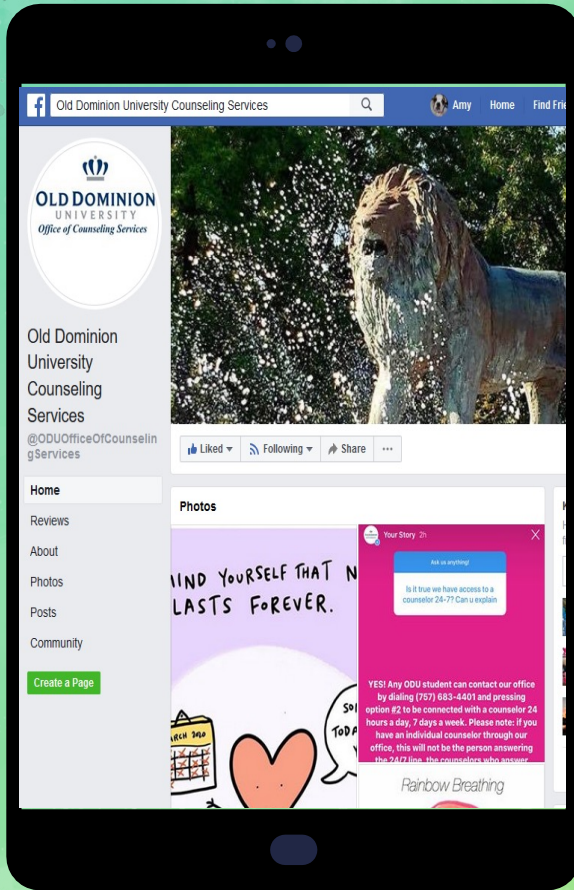
Behavioral Tips

(Find on slides # 49-53)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Join us on
Instagram!





Join Us on

Place your screenshot here

Facebook!

Emergency Support

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

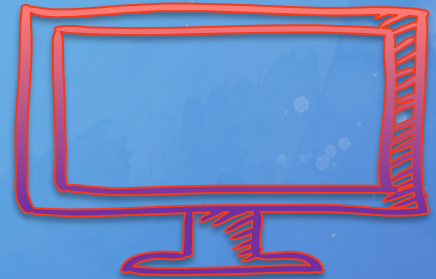
- (800) 273-8255
- <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

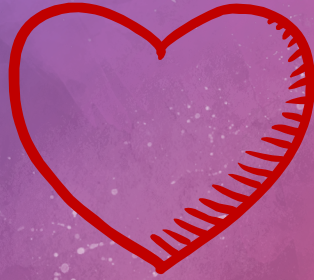
Crisis Text Line

- Text "HOME" to 741741
- <https://www.crisistextline.org/>

Apps for your Smartphone, Tablet, or Computer

- Headspace
- Stop, Think, and Breathe
- Calm
- Talk Space
- Better Help
- Mood Path
- Happify
- The Happiness Trap App with Dr. Russ Harris





THANK YOU For Participating!

Any questions?

You can call Counseling Services at 757-683-4401